

**Youth Literacy Project**

**Phase II**

Prepared for:

**Literacy Network Northeast**

38 Pine Street North

Suite 121

Timmins, ON

P4N 6K6

Web site: [nt.net/~literacy](http://nt.net/~literacy)

Prepared by Kimberly Fournier  
Project Coordinator

November 1, 2001

The Youth Literacy Project was funded by the:

National Literacy Secretariat



## **Table of Contents**

I. Introduction .....	3
<b>A. Abstract</b> .....	<b>3</b>
B. Phase I .....	4
C. Phase II: Goals and Objectives.....	4
D. Plan of Action .....	5
E. Anticipated Results.....	5
F. Project Documentation, Monitoring and Evaluation .....	6
II. Method .....	7
<b>G. Method</b> .....	<b>7</b>
H. Materials.....	8
I. Procedure.....	8
III. Results.....	9
<b>J. Demographic Variables</b> .....	<b>9</b>
K. “Reasons for Nonparticipation” Scale .....	11
L. Anecdotal Evidence.....	13
IV. Discussion & Recommendations .....	14
V. Appendices.....	15
<b>M. Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire</b> .....	<b>15</b>
N. Appendix B: “Reasons for Nonparticipation” .....	16
O. Appendix C: Pictorial Response Sheet .....	17
P. Appendix D: Group Administration of the Questionnaires .....	18
Q. Appendix E: Anecdotal Reasons for Nonparticipation.....	20
IV .References.....	22

## **Project: Phase II**

### **I. Introduction**

#### ***A. Abstract***

Since they have recently experienced full-time education, low literacy youth are a segment of our population that is neglected, even though they may suffer the stigma of low literacy more than any other group in our society. We certainly know that the numbers of northeastern Ontario youth (aged 15-24) attending Adult Basic Education is much lower than we could expect. Consequently, it has been the purpose of our research to investigate the reasons for youth nonparticipation in northeastern Ontario's existing Adult Basic Education programs, by attempting to get out-of-school youth involved in deciding what they feel would best meet their educational needs, and how the ideas that emerge from their discussion could be implemented.

Through our research, we have taken into account that the decision to participate in adult education depends upon the combined influence of numerous variables, in addition to demographic characteristics. Furthermore, we have recognized that the impetus for youth literacy initiatives must come from within the community itself, based on the community deciding what it feels will best meet the needs of its youth population. By consulting with local agencies, the Literacy Network Northeast has more effectively determined feasible recommendations and raised awareness in the community as to the stated needs of youth.

This report reflects the reality of attracting youth to literacy programs in northeastern Ontario. It is expected that the results of our research will further indicate the needs of youth, and inform community leaders in our area from the youth perspective.

We are of the opinion that listening to youth is the best means of knowing what it is they want in a learning environment. Through helping them to plan for enhancements to their quality of learning, within their respective communities, we hope to have identified potential learning opportunities and solutions for at risk youth.

## ***B. Phase I***

Initial research was undertaken to assess the reasons why young people do not wish to access literacy programs and services. Youth were interviewed and questionnaires distributed in order to gain the opinions and recommendations of youth. The questionnaire was developed by youth for youth. Peer facilitators were hired from each area to interview and survey their peers, and represented the following communities:

1. Timmins and area
2. Wawa
3. Iroquois Falls, Cochrane and Matheson area
4. Kapuskasing
5. Kirkland Lake, Larder Lake and area
6. New Liskeard, Haileybury and area

## ***C. Phase II: Goals and Objectives***

This project phase will take place in the following communities:

1. Chapleau and Wawa
2. Timmins and area
3. Iroquois Falls, Cochrane, Matheson and area
4. Kapuskasing, Smooth Rock Falls and Hearst
5. Kirkland Lake, Larder Lake and area
6. Englehart, New Liskeard, Haileybury and area

*Purpose of this phase was to examine:*

1. Why those youth who are accessing existing services are doing so
2. Why most youth are not accessing these existing services
3. How existing community services can be modified to better reach the target population

### ***D. Plan of Action***

1. Project Coordinator met with out of school youth between the ages of 15 and 24, in community-based focus group sessions, where issues regarding access to literacy programs and services were discussed. Focus groups took place in every community in our catchment area. Youth were hired part time, in each community to promote each session and secure attendance and participation. Those youth also acted as session hosts, while the Project Coordinator served as the focus group's main facilitator.
2. Project Coordinator met one on one with over forty literacy providers and community stakeholders to generate interest in and discuss issues surrounding youth access to literacy services/programs.
3. Once the youth focus group sessions and community stakeholder interviews were completed, this report was prepared summarizing the recommendations of the youth and incorporating the feedback of stakeholders and literacy providers. The report reflects the reality of attracting youth to literacy programs in Northeastern Ontario.

### **Note:**

The project has been amended to reflect these revised roles of the Project Coordinator and youth positions to better ensure our research maintained continuity. With the Project Coordinator facilitating the focus groups and conducting stakeholder interviews, we are certain that more impartial and objective observation, analysis and research have been achieved.

### ***E. Anticipated Results***

It is expected that the results of our research will further **reflect the needs of youth** and inform community leaders in our area, from the youth perspective.

The results will allow us to:

- Identify gaps in youth literacy service provision
- Provide a better understanding of the difficulties youth encounter in pursuing education
- Identify trends in the delivery of youth programs
- Identify reasons for youth dropping out and not dropping in
- Provide recommendations to community stakeholders and literacy service providers on youth programs
- Understand what attracts youth to learn and what discourages them
- Become attuned to the needs of youth and what motivates them to pursue learning
- Redefine our perceptions of youth and adjust our approach to youth literacy
- Identify methods that will prepare youth for the workforce and aid them in upgrading their literacy and learning skills

**Most importantly we have provided recommendations to assist the communities in our region in mapping out a strategy for literacy services specific to the needs of the drop out population in this age group.**

***F. Project Documentation, Monitoring and Evaluation***

The results of our research have been summarized in this final report and will be distributed to all Network member agencies. The report will be made available in print and electronic formats to community agencies, school boards, social service agencies and other literacy providers, as requested. The results are to be incorporated in literacy service planning for the Northeastern Ontario region.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

The following data will be incorporated in the findings:

- a) Number of young people participating in the study
- b) Number of agencies participating
- c) Recommendations of participants
- d) Recommendations of community stakeholders and literacy service providers
- e) **Potential changes in program planning regarding youth**

## **II. Method**

### ***G. Method***

Data was collected in six Northeastern Ontario communities. The total sample consisted of 53 individuals. Participants in the research were no longer enrolled in the regular education system, many who had been judged to have low literacy skills by themselves or by the referring agencies. They were either individuals for whom English was their first language or those for whom English was their second language. It was required that subjects comprehend English sufficiently that they could understand the questionnaire items read to them.

Each sample included individuals who had never participated in any form of adult education, and individuals who had participated in some form of adult education. In the total sample, 35 (66.04%) had never participated in any form of adult education and 18 (33.96%) had had some experience with adult education. Of those in the latter group, 8 (15.09% of the total sample) were currently participating in adult education, and 10 (18.87% of the total sample) had "dropped out".

The peer facilitators attempted to ensure that the groups were representative for gender and for age within the range studied, but this was a sample of convenience and groups were not forced to equality. Subjects were all required to be between 15 and 24 years old at the time of the data collection, with a mean age of 18.17 years. The total sample consisted of more males than females, with 35 males (66.04%) and 18 females (33.96%) participating.

Subjects were volunteers, who were recruited through community agencies such as Job Connect and Ontario Works, and other youth groups, as well as groups offering adult education. However, much of the successful sample contacts were made by way of word of mouth, through a peer facilitator, within the out of school youth social network. Advertisements were placed on BX One, a television community information network. Posters were put up and distributed throughout each of the subject communities.

Of necessity, the sample was a non-random one in that any one volunteering for the research participated. This does not compromise the degree to which the findings can be generalized, but simply speaks to the method with which we contacted a sample of low literacy youth not participating in training.

## *H. Materials*

**Demographic Questionnaire.** Subjects completed a demographic questionnaire (see **Appendix A**). Information included gender, age, income, employment status, and parental literacy level. Information collected from this questionnaire was entered into a database categorically.

**“Reasons for” Seale.** Subjects completed the Beder (1990) "Reasons for Nonparticipation" research instrument (see **Appendix B**). The 32 inventory items were developed from the results of interviews with high school leavers who had not attended any adult education programs. Thus the scale demonstrates content validity. It includes such statements as, "School is too hard" and "I already know enough".

Items on the inventory were read aloud by the project coordinator. To avoid requiring literacy skills for questionnaire response, a pictorial response sheet was developed (see **Appendix C**) using 5 facial pictographs ranging from extreme pleasure (agree strongly) through a neutral face to extreme displeasure (disagree strongly). The respondents demonstrated no difficulty recognizing the meaning of the pictographs. Responses to each item were scored from one (disagree strongly) to five (agree strongly). Each individual's score for each item was entered into a database.

## *I. Procedure*

Questionnaire administration took place in groups, in a setting with which the subjects were comfortable. The explanation of the research and ongoing instructions were made using a pre-established routine to ensure consistency across each setting (**Appendix D**). The project coordinator first administered the Demographic Questionnaire (see **Appendix A**). The items were read to the subjects and the experimenter pointed to an enlarged questionnaire, so the subjects could see which words on the questionnaire corresponded with their responses. Subjects having difficulty with the items received assistance from the both the project coordinator and peer facilitator. Following the administration of the Demographic Questionnaire, the subjects were introduced to the "Reasons for Nonparticipation" Scale and the pictograph response sheets (see **Appendices B and C**). Once again, the items were read aloud to the subjects by the project coordinator and anyone requiring assistance received it. The completion of the "Reasons for Nonparticipation" Scale ended the group session. Length of data collection times varied, dependent upon the number of participants per session and the amount of assistance required by the group members.

### III. Results

#### ***J. Demographic Variables***

The age distributions of the six northeastern Ontario focus group participants differed significantly. However, the age distributions of males and females did not differ significantly. As indicated in Table 1, the entire sample consisted of significantly younger subjects (15-19 years) than older subjects (20-24+ years).

**Table 1**

#### **Age Distribution**

Age	15	16	17	18	19	Total Younger	Percent Younger
	3	20	5	8	4	40	75.47%
Age	20	21	22	23	24	Total Older	Percent Older
	1	4	0	5	3	13	24.53%

For the entire sample significantly more males than females participated in the research (see Table 2, following page).

**Table 2**

#### **Gender Distribution Across Setting as Percent of Total Sample**

		<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Percentage of Respondents</u>
Gender	Male	35	66.04%
	Female	18	33.96%
	Total	N=53	100%

An examination of Table 3 indicates that the majority of respondents were living with one or both parents. There were no real significant differences between males and females on living arrangements.

**Table 3**

**Numbers Reporting Each Living Arrangement Grouped by Gender**

		<b>Spouse</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Other Relatives</b>	<b>Friends</b>	<b>Group Home</b>	<b>Alone</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	4	19	1	4	0	6	1	35
	<b>Female</b>	3	11	1	2	0	1	0	18
	<b>Total</b>	7	30	2	6	0	7	1	53

It is important to note that living arrangements varied significantly according to age. This appears to be due primarily to the categories "living with a spouse", in which respondents were frequently older, and "living with one or both parents," in which respondents were frequently younger. Living arrangements also varied significantly according to number of children. Most subjects with children reported living alone or in a spousal relationship while childless subjects more frequently reported living with parents.

The total sample differed significantly on several other variables. Reported monthly income differed significantly according to number of children. More subjects reported income over nine hundred dollars monthly when they also reported one child or more. In addition, work status significantly affected reported monthly income. As one would expect, the reporting part-time or full-time employment also reported higher monthly incomes. The numbers reporting employment were low however, with 67.92% of the sample reporting they were unemployed.

**Table 4**

**Education Participation**

		<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Past Only – ABE</b>	10	18.87%
	<b>Current only- ABE &amp; Upgrading</b>	4	7.55%
	<b>Past &amp; Current – ABE &amp; Upgrading</b>	5	9.43%
<b>Total Participant</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>35.85%</b>
<b>Nonparticipant</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>64.15%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>

As Table 4 indicates, for the entire sample fewer subjects (19, or 35.85%) had participated at some time in some form of adult education, be it Adult Basic Education (ABE) or skills upgrading classes, in comparison to those (34, or 64.15%) who had never participated in any adult or alternative education.

As expected, first language differed significantly across settings. This reflects a considerable group within the sample whose first language was French.

***K. “Reasons for Nonparticipation” Scale***

Responses on all 32 items ranged between 1 (really disagree) and 5 (really agree). Table 5 shows the reasons for not participating ranked by mean scores. The mean score and rank of each item provides important descriptive information about the entire sample group.

When the means for the items are considered, the nine items with a mean of 2.5 or greater shown in Table 5 represent at least two or three theoretical barriers to participation. Of the nine items, seven are clearly psychosocial barriers, and one is clearly a situational barrier. For example, the first three items (with the greatest mean responses) are psychosocial barriers. In general, the psychosocial items reflect a negative attitude toward school or self. The item "*I have to take care of my family*" is a situational barrier. The item "*Going back to school would be like going to high school all over again*" is possibly an institutional barrier, an informational barrier, or a psychosocial one. It is interesting that disapproval by family was considered on the mean as the least important barrier. As one would expect with the age group sampled, the item, "*I am too old to go back to school*" was fifth lowest, on the mean. Recall however that some of the subjects did strongly agree with these items, as all items ranged on a scale from 1 to 5.

**Table 5****Means for Reasons for Not Participating Adult Basic Education**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>
I just don't like school	3.08
I am usually too tired to go back to school.	2.92
I am too lazy to go back to school.	2.78
I have to take care of my family.	2.75
Going back to school would be like going to high school all over again.	2.71
I didn't like school so I don't want to go back.	2.69
There is too much on my mind to go back to school.	2.65
I would feel strange going back to school.	2.65
I am not motivated enough to go back to school.	2.59
I don't think I could use the things I would learn in school.	2.49
I am too set in my ways to go back to school.	2.41
There aren't many people in adult classes who are my age.	2.33
It would cost me too much money to go back to school.	2.27
I don't have enough energy to go back to school.	2.25
It would take me too long to finish high school.	2.25
Going back to school wouldn't make me any smarter.	2.24
School is too hard.	2.22
I move around too much to go back to school.	2.18

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>
I don't have enough free time to go back to school.	2.16
I don't think that school would be very good.	2.12
I don't know anything about adult classes.	2.12
I have too many time conflicts at work to go back to school.	2.10
I don't think I'm smart enough to go back to school.	2.06
I already know enough.	2.02
A high school diploma wouldn't improve my life.	1.98
I don't need a diploma	1.90
I couldn't pay for childcare or transportation.	1.78
I am too old to go back to school.	1.78
I don't go back to school because nobody knows that I don't already have an education.	1.76
I don't know where there are any classes.	1.75
My friends would laugh at me if I went back to school.	1.53
I felt that my family wouldn't like it if I went back to school.	1.41

### ***L. Anecdotal Evidence***

Subjects were invited to comment on the research, and add any barriers they experienced that they felt were not included on the "reasons for non participation scale" (see **Appendix E for a complete listing**). Many of these could either be included within the factor structure as additional barriers or were duplicated items on the "reasons for nonparticipation scale".

#### **IV. Discussion & Recommendations**

Literacy agencies identified youth literacy services as a major area of concern. Agencies often encounter difficulty in attracting youth to their programs. Through questionnaires conducted and discussions that resulted from the focus group sessions, youth have identified many reasons why they are not accessing the programs that exist within our organizations.

On the short term, programs such as bridging the student from one on one tutoring to classroom independence may serve to increase self confidence and reduce the negative perceptions of school, and of self. Flexible programming, with increased emphasis on correspondence programs would serve those individuals who have difficulty making time for school, or move too frequently to become involved in an established community program. The process of registration for these programs must be streamlined and simplified to avoid discouraging individuals with low levels of self-confidence.

The isolation of low literacy youth indicates that they tend to avoid potentially embarrassing social situations, and thus, do not seek out basic education. For the reason that such youth are isolated from mainstream society, they receive information regarding programs from other members of their non-literate subculture, or social network. Furthermore, due to the seclusion of this group, and their oral transmission of information, individual youth may be either unaware of, or misinformed concerning adult education programs. It is therefore, reasonable to conclude that advertising for adult education programs needs to "go underground" into the oral subculture of these individuals. Just as our project peer facilitators contacted respondents through individuals they knew, this may be a channel for program advertising to which they would listen.

Partnerships with community agencies (i.e. Job Connect, Ontario Works), many of which already began through our project efforts, may help to inform youth about education programs available to them, and moreover, provide youth with all their options when considering some type of alternative education program.

To go a step farther, storefront classes might make programs more accessible to youth. Perhaps at first they need to take classes in their environment, rather than in ours.

Above all, we need to recall that groups within our sample reported different needs. The sample was not homogenous in its responses concerning barriers to participation. Therefore in any program planning the specific needs of the particular target group must be considered.

It is necessary now to take all of these suggestions, and any other feasible solutions, and try to incorporate them into a campaign for youth literacy. Such a campaign plan would allow literacy providers to make a coordinated push in the battle to increase the skills of our young population.

To review, this research has attempted to identify the literacy needs of northeastern Ontario youth (aged 15-24). Confidently, we feel that the information gathered accurately reflects the reality of attracting youth to literacy programs, and we are optimistic that the recommendations provided in this report will assist literacy providers strategize considerable changes to their program planning regarding youth.

## V. Appendices

### *M. Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire*

**I am:**  Male  Female

**I was born in Canada:**  Yes  No

**I am a member of Canada's First Nations:**  Yes  No

**My first language is:**  English  French  Other

**I can talk in:**  English  French  Other

**I am:**  16  17  18  19  20  21  22  23  24  25 yrs old

**I am living:**  with my spouse  with one or both parents  with other relatives  
 with friends  in a group home  alone

**I have:**  1  2  3  4 or more children

**I work:**  full time  part time  I am not working

**Each month I get:**  no money  less than \$500  \$500-\$899  
 \$900-\$1299  \$1300-1699  \$1700-\$2000  
 over \$2000

**I study:**  full time  part time  I am not studying

**I am taking alternative learning classes:**  Yes  No

**I am taking skills upgrading classes:**  Yes  No

**I have taken alternative learning classes in the past:**  Yes  No

**I was:**  16  17  18  19  20  21  22  23  
 24 yrs old **when I started taking classes**

**My mother reads:**  very well  well  fairly poorly  don't know

**My father reads:**  very well  well  fairly poorly  don't know

**My spouse reads:**  very well  well  fairly poorly  don't know  
 I am not living with a spouse

## ***N. Appendix B: “Reasons for Nonparticipation”***

1. I don't have enough energy to go back to school.
2. I would feel strange going back to school.
3. I am usually too tired to go back to school.
4. I am not motivated enough to go back to school.
5. I am too old to go back to school.
6. I move around too much to go back to school.
7. I don't think I am smart enough to go back to school.
8. School is too hard.
9. I couldn't pay for childcare or transportation.
10. I don't think I could use the things I would learn in school.
11. I am too set in my ways to go back to school.
12. I just don't like school.
13. I don't need a diploma.
14. I don't have enough free time to go back to school.
15. Going back to school would be like going to high school all over again.
16. There aren't many people in adult classes who are my age.
17. My friends would laugh at me if I went back to school.
18. I feel that my family wouldn't like it if I went back to school.
19. It would cost me too much money to go back to school.
20. I have too many time conflicts at work to go back to school.
21. I don't go back to school because nobody knows that I don't already have an education.
22. I don't think that school would be very good.
23. It would take me too long to finish high school.
24. A high school diploma wouldn't improve my life.
25. I didn't like school so I don't want to go back.
26. There is too much on my mind to go back to school.
27. I don't know anything about adult classes.
28. Going back to school wouldn't make me any smarter.
29. I am too lazy to go back to school.
30. I don't know where there are any classes.
31. I have to take care of my family.
32. I already know enough

*O. Appendix C: Pictorial Response Sheet*

	<b>Really Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Maybe</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Really Disagree</b>
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
14.					
15.					
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					
21.					
22.					
23.					
24.					
25.					
26.					
27.					
28.					
29.					
30.					
31.					
32.					

***P. Appendix D: Group Administration of the Questionnaires***

*Begin by thanking them for their help, introducing ourselves, mentioning our provision of pizza and pop, describing the project and that we will need to read the instructions etc. since we will be doing this focus group session in 7 other communities, and need to conduct the mall in the same way.*

Now, first we're going to have you in a group answering some questions about yourselves. This should only take a few minutes. We will now hand out some answer sheets and pens to you. (*Hand out all materials*). Please leave them on the table in front of you when you leave at the end of our session.

I would like to stress that I'll be the only one who will see your answers. The confidentiality of all your answers is guaranteed. In light of this, please do not put your name on any of the answer sheets.

OK. Is everyone comfortable? Please get the first question sheet. It should look like this (*Hold up demographic questionnaire*). The answers to these questions will tell us a little about you, so we can group the answers; for example as made by a male or a female. Remember, we're the only ones who will see these answers. Remember too; if you don't want to answer any particular question just leave it out.

For example: (*point to question on questionnaire*)

Question 1    **I am:**    Male         Female

I would check Female

or Question 8        **I have:**    1    2    3    4 or more children

I would circle none and so on.

Any questions before we start?

*(Pause to answer questions then start reading questionnaire items. Point to each item on as you read it. Help subjects if necessary with reading and marking responses)*

OK, next we have a main set of statements that describe reasons why you might or might not take classes. To clarify for you, when we say "school" in some of the items, we mean adult classes; and just to note, some of the items might describe how you feel about yourself.

I would like to stress again that I'd be the only one who will see your answers. The confidentiality of all your answers is guaranteed.

We have handed out a set of answer sheets that all look the same. They are a series of face pictures like these (show example). Each set is numbered from 1 to 32.

What we would like you to do is listen to the statements we are going to read to you. Then, using these face pictures, you can show us how much you feel this statement applies to you (*for those*

*who have taken literacy training or skills upgrading -- how much you feel this statement applied to you before you started taking classes.)* The faces make a scale from 1 to 5 with (*point*) this really sad face meaning that you think the statement doesn't describe you at all, that you strongly disagree with the statement. This sad face (*point*) means you disagree with the statement. This neutral face (*point*) means maybe - you don't agree or disagree with the statement. This happy face (*point*) means you agree with the statement somewhat. This really happy face (*point*) means you really agree with the statement, that it really describes you. Any questions?

For example: To the statement, "I need a baby-sitter."  
You would circle the happy face (#4) if this could be or was a problem for you if you took classes. That is, you agree with the statement somewhat.

BUT you would circle the very happy face (#5) if this problem would keep you (*kept - for those in classes*) you from taking classes altogether. That is, you really agree with the statement. Any questions?

Ok, let's do the statements then. I'll read the statements one at a time, and you circle the answer showing how much you agree with the statement. Remember, it is how well the statement describes things that are keeping (*kept - for those who have already taken training*) you from taking classes. If you have any questions about any of the statements, ask one of us for help. Please let me know if I am reading the statements too fast or too slow.

**(Read the Reasons for Nonparticipation statements - make sure to answer any questions that may come up - -gauge the audience for pause time between items)**

Ok that's it for the group questions. Now since we have some time left, I thought we could have a general discussion about the subject at hand.

If you have any comments - say reasons that might have applied to you that we haven't talked about, please let us know before you leave tonight.

I would like to ask one final question of you: Do you have any suggestions for us in putting this meeting together?

I want to thank you once again for your help. Once we know the things that stop people your age from coming to classes, we hope to help create programs that would be easier to attend. If you would like to learn the results for the group you can call us at **1-800-489-7614**.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you know anyone you think might be willing to help with the project, either let us know so we can get in touch with them, or tell them about the project, and give them our telephone number (**1-800-489-7614**).

## ***Q. Appendix E: Anecdotal Reasons for Nonparticipation***

### **Dislike for School**

- Teachers "give you hell". /"They harass you".
- Too strict. /No freedom (ie. hall passes).
- Classes start too early in the morning.
- Too much time is spent on reprimanding students compared to teaching. /Misbehaving students ruin it for everyone else.
- Teachers don't listen. /Teachers are always in a rush.
- "Teachers embarrass me in class" /"Teachers make me angry".
- Didn't get along with teachers.
- Found school too boring. /Lost interest. /Found lessons repetitious.
- Class environment was too disruptive.
- "Sick of school".
- Teachers pick on the same kids ail of the time. /"You never get a second chance".
- "Teachers quit on me".

### **Perceived Effort Within Class – Self Confidence**

- Figured I couldn't do anything anyway
- Didn't know if it cost so didn't go.
- Didn't know about classes

### **Situational Barriers**

- Needed to get a full time job.
- Substance use/abuse.
- Pregnancy.
- Needed to help my dad.
- Personal problems interfered.
- Too much on my mind while my children are young.
- Too much pressure between school, homework and family.
- Time.
- Transportation
- Didn't go back as found out I was pregnant.
- Suffering from depression, so can't go back.
- Stress
- I had no permanent address so couldn't register.
- Money.
- Jail
- No school will take me because of violent behaviour

### **Low Perception of Need**

- "I can read and write as well as I need to".
- I'm too lazy. /Motivation isn't there.
- It's much more fun being out at school. /"I laugh at the kids in school".
- School isn't enough. /There should be more co-op.

### **Psychosocial Barriers**

- Feel different from everyone else in class.
- Embarrassed that I always lag behind everyone else in class.

### **Perceived Effort Beyond Class**

- Distance.
- Needed \$21.00 for an English Book

### **Planning to Return**

- Intends to return to a learning program once her youngest child is ready to attend preschool. Considering enrolment at Focus on Learning to restart her education.
- Sometimes I want to go back and other times, I'm unsure.
- Yes, I want to be able to make good money for myself and provide for my family.

#### **IV. References**

Beder, H. (1990). Reasons for nonparticipation in adult basic education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 40(4), 207-218.

Curtin, A. (1999) Learning About Literacy: Providers. Literacy Link South Central.

Hayes, E. R., & Darkenwald, G. G. (1988), Participation in basic education: Deterrents for low-literate adults, Studies in the Education of Adults, 20(1),16-28,

Jessup, L. (1996). Barriers to Youth in Acquiring Literacy Assistance. Tillsonburg and District Multi-Services Centre.

Kapsalis, C. (1999). Literacy Profile of Ontario's Youth. Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.